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POE AND RECENT POETICS.

NEARLY five years ago Mr. Edmond Gosse wrote as follows to the *Critic*, the well-known literary weekly of New York:

The result of your ballot for "The Best Ten American Books" declared in your issue for June 3, 1893, contains one feature of great and grave public interest. It cannot, I think, be too strongly impressed on the notice of Americans of taste. It is a feature of omission. You give a list of authors who receive "in all twenty votes or more." These authors are thirty in number, and one of them received nearly seven hundred votes. But among these thirty does not occur the name of the most perfect, the most original, the most exquisite of the American poets. The name of Edgar Allan Poe does not occur.

The omission is extraordinary and sinister. If I were an American, I should be inclined to call it disastrous. While every year sheds more luster on the genius of Poe among the most weighty critical authorities of England, of France, of Germany, of Italy, in his own country prejudice is still so rampant that he fails to secure a paltry twenty votes. . . . You must look to your own house, but it makes one wonder what is the standard of American style.

It is too recent yet to say to what extent Americans of taste, to whom Mr. Gosse appeals, have responded to his message. There are signs, however, of an awakened interest which we cannot mistake. Scarcely a number of our better literary magazines is now appearing, without some direct or indirect reference to the chief poet of the South. The sad and unutterable feelings, the thrill of poetic ecstasy, that play such havoc with one's ease of soul as one tries, with Poe, to apprehend the spirit of supernal loveliness, may be, as he says, limited to souls fittingly constituted. If this be true, there is as yet no danger of a Poe cult. The critical canons of healthy sentiment held by Mr. Maurice Thompson and Mr. Coventry Patmore do not permit us to see poetic beauty unless it conforms to their rural and ultra-Attic standards and cannot be applied to such men as Poe and Verlaine. The latter demand lovers and critics whose hearts will respond to the sheer beauty of their song.

One need not necessarily be an artist to respond *in toto* to

the poet's mood; but there is a law of temperament, stronger than the conventional canons of criticism, that demands that he be loved in his way. What folly it would be to sing of Dryden or Haydn as Father Tabb has of Poe and Chopin:

Over each the soul of Beauty flung
A shadow, mingled with the breath
Of music that the sirens sung
Whose utterance is death.

That quatrain is one of the rarest bits of recent verse; as criticism it is inspired. In either case we are lulled by "the soothing cadence of the sighing nocturne."

Poe had that temperamental quality which fitted him pre-eminently as the poet of night. His intense love for the night-consuming hours is shown in nearly all his poems. His quest of "El Dorado" leads him

Over the mountains of the moon,
Down the valley of the shadow.

Standing, with this poet of perforce Dantesque suggestion, amidst the ruins of the Coliseum, we feel the beauty of

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night.

In Poe's efforts to grasp the beauty of infinity he has often put the question, not to the sphinx (for that would be too classic an allusion) but to the flying demon in the storm-cloud; he sought within the shadow of the grave, or where the "swarthy bat holds its midnight vigil," to commune with the invisible spirits of the air. In his worship of the grave we see only the love of solitude and the desire to learn its dread secrets. To him it is but one of the many avenues where angels tread, crossing man's single life-path at odd angles.

So, for example, one does not find in such a poem as "Spirits of the Dead" "the brooding sense of terror and shame of mortality" of Byron; nor again, the Ariel force of the "March of Death" in the "Jest Book," although there is more in common between Poe and Beddoes than the coincidence of their death.

But the world is not always a problem to Poe. Wandering like Æneas, in the mantle mist of Venus, he even escapes the despair of hope, which Tennyson and Browning do not always shake off. Amid the fitful flare of heated tempest and the lightning's glare one catches, now and then, the bland smile of the serene and azure sky, under which the storm-shaken shallop of our poet is momentarily lulled and caressed. In his verses "To Helen" he sings:

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Although this poem was written when Poe was only fourteen, the fact of its retention by him in the edition of his better poems would argue for its occasional accord with his later mood.

In the poem "For Annie," strophes six and seven are most beautiful in their Greek suggestion. In them we have a veritable apotheosis of the grave. We see death robbed of its glooms, and catch the spirit of classic repose.

In the poem "To One in Paradise" starry hope did rise but to be overcast. Of himself he says:

For alas! alas! with me
The light of life is o'er!
"No more—no more—no more—"
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar.

In this poem we catch the full sweep of Titanic despair, from the virility of passion at its climax to the waning lament of its unsatisfied longing. It is here that we see poetic kinship with Villon's immortal "Ballade of Departed Ladies," with its weird refrain, "Where are the snows of yesternorn?" or with Browning's "Toccata of Galuppi's," with its significant query as to what has become of the maze of dancers who kept time to the rhythmic beats of the soul of the musician. In the following lines from the "Coliseum" Poe

stands face to face with the pathos of temporal decay, the solution of which stamps Villon as a modern poet:

Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!
Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, specterlike, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones.

As the theme develops, however, Poe, with Tennyson, feels the spirit of the age, and Hope—*Cana Fides*—breathes into those pallid stones a prophetic message for the daring mind, bold enough to question the prostrate, shadowy, sphinxlike forms.

Poe loved to dwell in haunted woodland, with dark waters embedded in the dim and misty air. A beauty wilder and more weird than that which is objectively realized haunts the poet's soul, and the inability to attain this is the pathos of his existence. This unrealized longing and aspiration is the soul of Romanticism, for romantic beauty is nothing but the weird beauty that comes to us in the moonlight's spell.

In one of Poe's earlier Addressed Poems, "The Lake," there is a couplet which is a key to his solace in the strange and sad:

In spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot.
.
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound
And the tall pines that towered around.
But when the night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody—
Then, ah, then, I would wake
To the terror of that lone lake.
Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight.

This closing couplet was elaborated by Poe, in after-years, into the very soul of his poetic principles. "Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we

struggle," he says, "by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of time, to obtain a portion of that loveliness whose very element, perhaps, appertains to eternity alone."

It was this struggle to apprehend subjective beauty which led Poe into the fantastic, and which led Victor Hugo to evolve, with the fancy of the Celt and the Oriental love for decoration, his theory of the grotesque in art.

Paul Adam says: "The joy of art is not gaiety; the joy is grave, harmonizing with all the manifestations of living." This is, above all, the aspiration of the present school of Symbolists, or Neo-Romanticists. They try to realize the spiritual joy. The French school, with Mallarmé at its head, through the synthesis of all art, claims to be the "creator of its ecstasies and its heavens." As one of them says, in speaking of modern man: "il désire, il désire, O mon Dieu, comme jamais le monde n'a désiré." With Verlaine poetry was to be some intangible winged soul in flight "toward other skies and other loves." Although there is much in common between Mallarmé's "Vers en Prose" and Poe's "Prose Poems," yet how very great the difference between the vagueness of the French school in which

la nuance seule fiance
le rêve au rêve et la flûte au cor!

and the deep, mystic undercurrent which is felt in Tieck, Coleridge, Poe, or Hugo! There is no doubt but that Poe is largely indebted to the mysticism of the German Romanticists. This is evident in the dreamy symbolism of his poetry, for which Coleridge was no mean foster-mother to him. In the musical quality of his verse, however, he is transcendent. He not only caught the fleeting voice which runs through Wagner's operas, but, with the prescience of the poet and the keenness of the critic, spun the warp into which has been woven by Gautier and Swinburne such rich and cunning designs in verse.

This power may have come to Poe through the rich blood of his Celtic ancestors, which flowed rhythmically through

his veins. It shows itself, now and then, in the startling antithesis of phrase that is often used by him to heighten the poetic effect, or becomes, again, the embodied theme of a larger poem. The force of this association is seen in "Lenore,"

Let no bell toll! lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the damnèd earth!

and again in the longer poem "To Helen,"

There fell a silken silvery veil of light.
.
.
Fell on the upturned faces of these roses
That gave out
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death.

A poetic parallel to the grinning gargoyle surmounting a Greek column may be found in the following lines from "Al Aaraaf," in which he questions the

Spirit! that dwellest where
In the deep sky
The terrible and fair
In beauty vie.

To Victor Hugo Poe was the prince of American literature; to Charles Baudelaire he was the prince of all literatures. Were it not that the "Fleurs du Mal" stamp Baudelaire as one of the sweetest singers in the voluptuous choir of song that wells from France, we should feel that he made his translation of Poe to the lyre of Israfil "the trembling, living wire of those unusual strings."

Gautier says that Baudelaire "translated Poe's works with an identification of style and thought so exact that they seem original works rather than translations." In his hands Poe's poetic principles became a living and molding force in French verse. It is related of him that shortly before his death he solemnly resolved to "pray every morning to God, the Fountain of all strength and of all justice, to his father, to Mariette, and to Poe."

"Les Fleurs du Mal," of Baudelaire, did not come out until 1857, twelve years after the complete edition of Poe's poems. That Baudelaire is the source whence Swinburne

drew, in early life, his inspiration, may be easily seen in "Poems and Ballads," which appeared in 1866.

The following extract from one of Swinburne's letters, under date of 1875, clearly shows the literary connection between Poe, Baudelaire, Swinburne, and Mallarmé: "And there [in France]," he says, "the admirable translation of his [Poe's] prose works—by a fellow poet, whom also we have to lament before his time—is even now being perfected by a careful and exquisite version of his poems, with illustrations full of the subtle and tragic force of fancy which impelled and molded the original song; a double homage, due to the loyal and loving cooperation of one of the most remarkable younger poets, and one of the most powerful leading painters in France, M. Mallarmé and M. Manet;" and further he says that he would like to express his firm conviction that, "widely as the fame of Poe has already spread, and deeply as it is already rooted in Europe, it is even now growing wider and striking deeper as time advances."

Swinburne's nature is not gnomic, but could it be that he built his phrase better than he knew? Poe's principles have indeed struck deeper, and have become the groundwork of the synthetic art that stands resplendent in the *ville des beaux arts* and penetrates, with its refulgent rays, either side of the Atlantic. Within the temple, both Mallarmé and Manet occupy a fitting place and, in conjunction with the mellow cadence of siren music, through the exaltation of their finely wrought souls, have helped to shape the program of this school.

To discuss the merits of these poets is not the purpose of this paper. To do that, at the present moment, one needs to have the courage born of madness or of despair. We shall never be able, collectively, to see the just proportions of the school until a poet-artist enters the lists in its behalf, with the critical acumen of a Wincklemann, who reproduced in himself and reader the sensuous equilibrium of the Greek, in order to make the individual work of classic art possible. And when we confront that thought squarely, the

hopelessness is almost seen! There have been many poet-critics, but artist-critics neither thrive nor survive. Not their limitations, but ours, make, at present, their efforts in the field of criticism futile—I use the word with its larger interpretation.

As poet, or artist, however, members of the school have been examined according to the canons of their respective arts, and have been given what must be more than transitory fame. Wagner, Berlioz, Whistler, Rossetti, Puvis de Chavannes, Verlaine! Who will question their right to Parnassus? It is true that, as in all schools, the ass masquerades in lion's garb, and we are thankful, even to the boorish critic, when he exposes both dupe and duplicity.

In music we are not so likely to err. The soul of the creation seems to be able to speak to us so directly there, that, unless we allow ourselves to be caught in the meshes of convention, we can interpret immediately rhapsodic or developed theme.

“Poetry and music seem unable to attain alone their ideal; it is only in common that they reach it,” says Morice. “What we love in Bach, Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann, de Chavannes, Carrière, Verlaine, Burne-Jones is the ideal under different conditions.” “Again,” he says, “if music inspires us more profoundly and more generally than painting, it is because the former is at the same time more removed and yet more intimate, nearer the ‘origin de la fin des sentiments;’ it is ever an appeal toward the unknown, the mysterious, an expansion of the soul.” How much it all seems an echo of the following from Poe: “A poem, in my opinion,” he says, “is opposed to a work of science by having, for its immediate object, pleasure, not truth; to romance by having for its object an indefinite instead of a definite pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is obtained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with indefinite sensations, to which end music is an essential, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music, without the idea,

is simply music; the idea, without the music, is prose, from its very definitiveness."

I do not mean to assert that all this is new with Poe. . As we turn the pages of the world's literary progress, we catch both theme and exemplification in the various modern literatures. If, however, we can detect a continuity since the advent of his genius, our thesis may demand respectful consideration.

Through enlightenment and humanity, the war of nations may become a bloody fiction, but miscegenation will never be able to put an end to the battle of the books. Deeper than the intellect and more potent than the will, there lies buried within us all the temperament of the individual. The Romanticist asserts its existence through profession and the Classicist through denial. Many have been the shades and tints given to this struggle. The tocsin of the party in one period became its shibboleth in a subsequent one. Through it all, however, we are able to catalogue our man or period according to certain general principles, axiomatic in their application.

There is a certain theory that the value of a piece of art is to be determined by the laws of light and shadow. Individual and national temperament may be viewed equally as well from the standpoint of chiaroscuro. By magnifying the light and shadow proportions you have the greater or lesser Classicist or Romanticist. The true proportions are destroyed as much by a refined and subtle intellect as by an exaggerated emotion. We may prefer the placid repose of the polished verse of the Pope-Boileau-Gottsched school to the soul-haunting morbidezza of that of de Musset-Byron-Leopardi, but true art is not to be found at either extreme.

In order to see clearly Poe's position, a rapid review of that national current whence he in part derived, and which, in conjunction with him, has colored the poetics of to-day, will not be untimely at this point. As a subjective race, the German has always been of Romantic temperament. To Shakspeare, Milton, Richardson, Ossian, the Germans turned for consolation when, with the hope of national con-

tinuity destroyed by the deadly Thirty Years' War, the literary autocrat tried to foist on them the pungent, epigrammatic Voltaire. The Zürich school, writing after English models, would have won the day against Gottsched and Leipzig, even if Lessing, one of the keenest critics that ever lived, had not stormed and gained Berlin. Thus the creative genius of Goethe, inspired by Hamann and Herder, found itself untrammelled and a public made receptive to its utterance.

Mysticism will always tinge the philosophy of a subjective race and symbolize itself in its poetry. Poetry will then become as Boyesen says, "the vague, ethereal, and impalpable essence, which impresses the senses, not through the grosser faculty of understanding but according to some mysterious law appealing directly to the deepest emotions of the heart."

The weird, supernal beauty of the Romantic School in Germany was conceived at the fount of philosophy. The sovereign *ego* of Fichte became the supreme will of the poet that annuls all rules and proclaims his right to absolute self-government. Wrapped within the gloom of the Goth, like Siegfried in his Tarnkappe, he threw off the clutches of the Illuminati that stifled his emotions, and gave himself up to the naive feelings of primitive culture. As Georg Brandes says, "the Romanticists wanted to feel the knight's enthusiasm and the monk's ecstasy; to rave poetically, dream melodiously, bathe in moonshine, mystically feel the spirits of the air fluttering in the milky wave."

The romantic mood is well unfolded for us here: the disenfranchised imagination and love of beauty; the dim, vague, mysterious aspiration that seeks to actualize the beauties of haunting memories. With the exception of Tieck and possibly Novalis, the school worked through philosophy. The first number of their official organ, the *Athenæum*, proclaims that the purpose of the school was to "concentrate rays of culture in one focus, and to reestablish the eternal synthesis of poetry and philosophy." As a natural consequence, the garment in which the spiritual seeks to clothe itself became

irregularly seamed with the threads of allegory. Schleiermacher's subjectivity sought its ideals in religious rapture, which Friedrich Schlegel called "the animating universal soul of culture." The Mariencult drew a number of them to the bosom of Holy Church. This may have been with Wackenroder, as suggested by Boyesen, from purely artistic motives, but with Novalis it was the worship of loving adoration. The companionship of women that is sought by all men of poetic qualities of mind leads them in their demand for the female ideal of Divinity to Madonna-worship. One finds loving evidence of this in Villon, Novalis, de Musset, Rossetti, Poe, and Verlaine. This phase of the German school directly influenced that of France through Chateaubriand's "Génie du Christianisme."

There is another phase, however, which worked upon the form as well as the spirit of the poem, the indirect influence of which, through Victor Hugo, may be as strong upon France as that of Poe working directly through Baudelaire. Tieck was its high priest, and in his dithyrambic utterances we catch the first note of that long sound-wave, wedding melody to verse, which, from the low, dull monotone of Coleridge's "Christabel" and "Ancient Mariner," through the shriek and howl of Hugo's "Les Orientales" and "Les Voix Intérieures," to the unutterably sweet, sensuous movement of Rückert's ghazels, characterizes the verse of the century. At first it is but the gentle moan and toss of Frau Musica as she awakens from her long sleep; from which, contrary to that of Barbarossa within the Kyfhäuserberg, she has been set free by that bird of ill-starred fate, Poe's "Raven." Garbed with gown of richest Oriental hues, woven from the imagery suggested by the revival of Persian and Arabic verse, she has once more taken her seat aloft, and directs the music of the heavenly spheres:

The blessed damosel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven.

.
The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather

Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

.

"I wish that he were come to me—
For he will come," she said.

.

"And I myself will teach to him,

I myself lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause
Or some new thing to know."

Tieck, with the lyric impulse common to his race, felt that music must have existed before spoken language, and proclaimed that poetry, if it were to appeal to the deepest emotions, to those "anonymous feelings" that well up within us all at times, should follow the beat of tuneful rhythm. Music, as inarticulate harmony, can alone satisfy that exalted poetic sentiment which is incapable of expression and too fleeting for words. In making sense secondary to sound, Wackenroder's dithyrambs became doctrinal. But how great the gulf between his "charming of the ear through the caressing concord of sounds" and the inspired technic of Swinburne, Poe, or Verlaine, building its harmony from the union of discords!

Mr. Stedman, speaking of Swinburne, says: "The first emotion of one who studies even his immature work is that of wonder at the freedom and richness of his diction, the susurrus of his rhythm, his unconscious alliterations, the endless change of his syllabic harmonies, resulting in the alternate softness and strength, height and fall, riotous or chastened music, of his affluent verse. How does he produce it? Who taught him all the hidden springs of melody?"

To answer that question would demand more time than the occasion of this paper affords. One can only hope to hint at the influence which our American poet may have had in the birth of this mighty son of song. We might quote at random from Swinburne's vast golden treasury of song to

prove the statement of our chaste and scholarly American critic. The initial passage of "By the North Sea" suggests itself:

A land that is lonelier than ruin;
A sea that is stranger than death;
Far fields that a rose never blew in,
Wan waste where the winds lack breath;
Waste endless and boundless and flowerless
But of marsh blossoms fruitless as free;
Where earth lies exhausted, as powerless
To strive with the sea.

In the ballad and roundel, in which repetend and refrain play so great a part in the poetic effect, Swinburne is undoubtedly the master in recent verse. One has but to recall his "Ballad of Dreamland" in this connection.

Now this use of the repetend, which is the very soul of music, the rhythmic, staccatolike beat of the monotone, is what gives value to Poe's poetry and may be said to characterize his verse. As a parallel to the ballad just mentioned runs the haunting burden of "Fell on the upturned faces of these roses," which flits above and tremulously touches, not to interrupt but to heighten the sustention of the thought, in the poem "To Helen." This is easily seen in one of the quaintest bits from Poe's weird music, "Ulalume."

Poe, through his conscious art, attained an almost perfect mastery in this infinite variation of rime. It was not original with him, being as old as the echo from the hill; in his hands, however, it became a studied scheme in metrics. And his consummate use and amplification of what has since become a metrical canon more subtle and potent than any law of prosody compels us to refer to *him* for its beginning in modern poetics, instead of to the poet of English ballad measures.

The wealth of Moorish allusions in Poe's poems suggests a possible acquaintance with the revival of Orientalia which began about 1810 and culminated in Rückert's ghazels, and in Goethe's "Westöstlicher Divan." Between the two latter and Poe, however, there is one marked diversity in treatment. With the two former, as well as with Hugo, the repe-

tition is used at more or less regular intervals throughout the poem, and becomes, in a long poem, somewhat fatiguing to the reader; but with Poe, occurring as it does irregularly and in poems of uneven strophic structure, it serves to quicken the attention of the reader.

The revival of ballad forms and the renaissance of Provençal amatory poems made possible the adoption and perfect use of the Persian and Arabic verse scheme. Goethe was particularly receptive. His “*Nachtgesang*,” which was written in 1803, has the third verse of each strophe paralleled by the initial one of each subsequent strophe. I quote the second and third strophes of this poem in the original, since the striking sound effects would be entirely destroyed by an inadequate translation:

Bei meinem Saitenspiele
Segnet der Sterne Heer
Die ewigen Gefühle;
Schlafe! was willst du mehr?
Die ewigen Gefühle
Heben mich, hoch und hehr,
Aus irdischem Gewühle;
Schlafe! was willst du mehr?

The charm of this interlinked repetition, however, reached, in the almost faultless technic of Rückert, a degree considerably beyond that of Goethe, melodious as his verse may be. Bayard Taylor says of the former's poems that “their melody is of that subtle delicate quality which excites a musician's fancy, suggesting the tunes to which the words should be wedded.” The sweep of Wagner's operas, in which the music merely serves to interpret the meaning of the words, cannot but make us feel that we have before us the roseate dawn of the new era in verse.

Gott geleite die armen traurigen Kranken heim!
Gott geleite die müden irren Gedanken heim!
Gott verleihe dir einen Stab der Geduld, mein Herz!
Müder Wanderer! un am Stab zu wanken heim.

The caressing movement of the verse in this ghazel of Rückert is so simple here as to seem almost artless. How full and rich it stands in contrast to the insipidity and poverty of most of Mangan's translations! The eagerness to make a

point, which is so often displayed by the impulsive critic, coupled with the desire to show that Poe, the foe of plagiarism, had been himself beset by this deadly sin of literature, led to the belief that Poe had borrowed from Mangan his use of repetition. The folly of it all was seen when it was discovered that Poe's death preceded the original edition of Mangan's poems by ten years.

There have been many attempts to read into the different periods of Poe's life various influences; but, as we have seen, they seldom become tangible to truth. In his temperament, he has genetic kinship with a number of poets of the past, who stand with him as stadia in the thread of weird and mysterious thought that runs through the human race. There is a certain musical quality of his verse, however, that is new with him. If it were not so significant in the poems of his youth, one would certainly have a tenable thesis in the direct or indirect influence of Rückert through Hugo. The latter's Arabic verse is not so exquisitely polished as that of the German Harira, but it has that pleading quality which gives "le ton" to all his poetry. It is like the ever-repeated plaintive request of the artless child at play—you may momentarily refuse to heed, but it unconsciously holds and fascinates you. This is not so discernible in "Les Djinns" of Victor Hugo, but the curious reader may strike in this poem a remarkable parallel with "The Bells" of Poe.

With Gautier, perhaps, began decorative poetry. In him we have the convergence of the various streams that, as in case of Rückert, only hint at the possibility of such a synthesis, or, as with Poe, show an almost tantamount skill. That Gautier derived from Rückert can be easily seen from the following lines of "Ce que disent les Hirondelles:"

Je comprends tout ce qu'elles disent,
Car le poète est un oiseau;
Mais, captif, ses élans se brisent
Contre un invisible réseau!

Des ailes! des ailes! des ailes!
Comme dans le chant de Rückert,
Pour voler, là-bas avec elles
Au soleil d'or, au printemps vert.

It is more than passingly difficult to show that in Poe we have the conscious originator of this movement which has developed to such an extent that some of the votaries are said to possess the skill whereby they may use their language as an instrument on which to play Hungarian rhapsodies; we can only hope at this writing to emphasize his connection with it. The influence of Tieck, Goethe, Rückert on the movement through Hugo and Gautier has been seen; Swinburne and Gautier, both of whom derived from Charles Baudelaire, made it possible for Verlaine to sing as the essential principle of poetics:

De la musique avant toute chose
Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose.

In France the immortality and universality of Poe's lyrical genius was so projected by Charles Baudelaire that there has not yet been even momentary obscurantism. Poe could not have appealed to Baudelaire save through the Celtic quality of his verse. That is why, perhaps, Tennyson, the ethereal nature of whose early poems caught Poe's fancy, has had but little influence on this movement. Tennyson had not learned "that there was nothing left for poetry but to be the glowing forge of words;" in fact, prior to the English pre-Raphaelites the island saw but little native poetry written for pure delight in sensuous sound. It was then that they first saw that a poem to express the inarticulate must have tone values. There are subtle flashes of this, however, in Byron's "Stanzas for Music," Keats's "Hyperion," and Shelley's "Skylark." In the ode on a Grecian Urn we read:

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.

Keats bared his soul when he cried for a "life of sensations rather than thoughts;" but it was, after all, with him, only the poetic impulse, that, now and then, gave utterance to this "soul in flight." With Poe it was that and something more; it was poetic principle. "It is in music," he

says, "that the soul attains the end for which, when inspired by the poetic sentiment, it struggles. . . . There can be but little doubt that in the union of poetry with music we shall find the widest field for poetic development." Music dominates Poe's poetry as does painting that of the earlier Romanticists. The blend of the two has given that consummate art which is the aspiration of recent poetics.

I would not say that Poe has influenced the movement only through the music of his syllables. Quite the contrary. He may be called an impressionist in the same sense as Maxime Maufra, a painter of thoughts, feelings, emotions. In his poems are found poetic values true to the laws of light and shadow. It is no mere coincidence that makes Poe the poet of the Valisnerian lotus, the worshiper of "thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante! Isola d' oro! Fior di Levante!" His highly polished verse, pregnant with the dull luster of the intaglio and the sparkle of the cameo, stands prismatically resplendent in its garb of suggestive hues, at the beginning of the picture-painting age in which the purple shadings are the interpreter of the spiritual life. We fail to understand the purpose of his poetic work, however, if we give undue prominence to the color side. It is unquestionably the tone quality of his verse that made possible the new notation of Swinburne and Verlaine. This is nowhere more evident than in the poem of his earliest youth, "Al Aaraaf, which contains at once the fullest and thinnest utterance of his muse, but which withal stands a monument to precocious genius:

Sound loves to revel in a summer night;
Witness the murmur of the gray twilight.

Young flowers were whispering in melody
To happy flowers that night, and tree to tree;
Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a starlit grove, or moonlit dell;

In the presence of many similar passages one catches a new pipe in the erstwhile poetic orchestration; which, tinged with the weird voice of the sweeping seraphim, is yet daintier than the sprightly Ariel of the ballad.

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